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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000505

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH SPECIAL ENVOY NOTES GOT SURPRISE AT MALIKI
SUCCESS IN PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS; WILL PRESS TO REDUCE
KURD-ARAB TENSIONS

REF: BAGHDAD 306

Classified By: PolMil Minister Counselor Michael Corbin for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: At a February 17 meeting, Murat Ozcelik, Turkey's Special Envoy to Iraq discussed Turkey's surprise at the success of PM Maliki's list in the provincial elections and his strengthened position as a result. Ozcelik said Turkey would use its good relations within the KRG and the GOI to send a clear message of the negative consequences of Kurd-Arab conflict but suggested that Iraq's oil and gas resource potential was becoming an increasingly significant factor in Turkey's relationship with the country. Iran, he said, does not want Turkey to have good relations within the KRG and despite some complaints about Maliki, most Iranians are well pleased with him. Regarding the Iraq-Turkey-U.S. trilateral security dialogue, Ozcelik said Turkey supported the GOI proposal to open a trilateral intelligence office in Erbil even though the GoT is frustrated that there has been little intelligence shared through the committee to date. End summary.

DAWA WIN STRENGTHENS MALIKI - WEAKENS KURDS

¶2. (C) In a meeting at the Embassy on his first day of a three-day visit to Baghdad before traveling to the KRG, Turkish Special Envoy to Iraq Murat Ozcelik said he had expected parties aligned with PM al-Maliki to do well in the provincial elections - but had not counted on al-Maliki being strengthened to such a degree (ref A). He should not be too emboldened, however," said Ozcelik, "but Masoud (Barzani) should also be careful." He said he would use his good offices to deliver strong messages on the dangers of Kurd-Arab conflict to both and would be of assistance to stability in Iraq - especially regarding Kirkuk. He said that The Iranians are not pleased with Turkish efforts to develop relations with KRG officials and that while some Iranians complain about Maliki, he was convinced that the Government of Iran was pleased with the Iraqi PM's performance.

¶3. (C) When asked if he thought a vote of no confidence against Maliki was likely in the near future, Ozcelik declined to speculate, but said it would be "a bad sign if they tried. Nobody wants to be the head of a caretaker government. Besides, the people voted for Maliki. If he is not successful in the coming months, then that will be different." Ozcelik described Maliki as 'increasingly paranoiac' and said the Prime Minister probably would not agree to see Ozcelik after receiving a message to moderate his actions when he visited Turkey in December: a message that was weakened by Maliki's subsequent electoral success.

¶4. (C) Ozcelik planned to meet with Sunni Vice President Hashimi (of the Tawafuq/IIP) and Osama Najaifi (Council of Representatives member and al Hadba party official) whom Maliki was "taking steps towards" because their parties did well in the elections. He said the Turks would tell these parties not to push back too hard - and not too press the Kurds too strongly.

¶5. (C) Ozcelik said Turkey wanted to let KRG officials know that Turkey now stood behind it - and would continue contacts. "We will tell Maliki not to push too hard against the Kurds," he said. Turkish President Gul planned to visit Iraq on March 8 and, in the first week of April, Turkish FM QIraq on March 8 and, in the first week of April, Turkish FM Babacan is scheduled to make a tour of several cities in Iraq including to open a consulate in Basra to be followed by consulates in Mosul and Erbil. Ozcelik said plans for Gul to visit the KRG had been scrapped because of strong negative Turkish reaction to the KRG's premature announcement of the visit. Instead FM Babacan would visit the KRG.

KRG Energy Resources

¶6. (C) Ozcelik briefly raised his potential energy agenda with GOI and KRG representatives at two points in the meeting. First, he assured us that "we have no intention to act against your interests, which would also be against our interests." He had, however, spoken in Istanbul to representatives of BP, Shell, and TPAO about the outcome of the Iraqi Ministry of Oil's (MoO) February 12-14 workshop in Istanbul. The international oil company (IOC) executives had

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not been happy, and appeared to be seriously considering whether to participate in the bid round to invite IOC participation in six producing oil fields and two gas fields in Iraq. Ozcelik said he wanted to convey to PM Maliki that his position would improve in the national elections if he could show increases in oil production, which required MoO to show more flexibility in the bid round process.

¶7. (C) Ozcelik said he planned to underscore Turkey's possible assistance in developing Kurdistan's energy resources with KRG officials. He reasoned that, if KRG officials realized the potential revenue already available to them within their present territory, their interest in Kirkuk would abate somewhat.

TRILATERAL SECURITY DIALOGUE

¶8. (C) On the subject of the Iraq-Turkey-U.S. Trilateral Security Dialogue (ref B), Ozcelik said Turkey supports the GOI proposal to open a trilateral intelligence office in Erbil to be staffed by all three partner nations. He said it was important for the U.S. to participate in this office and he had heard from Minister of State al-Waeli earlier that afternoon that the GOI was in agreement on moving forward with the office. He said Turkey viewed the talks as necessary "cover" for Turkey's real discussions with the KRG on countering the PKK. There had been no exchange of substantive intelligence to date, Ozcelik said, but the Turkish military would "do things" with the Peshmerga as soon as the trilateral office opened, which he hoped would be as soon as possible.

COMMENT

¶9. (C) Ozcelik's willingness to deliver helpful messages is useful, although he made clear that Turkish hydrocarbon interests were high on his agenda. We believe the upcoming

visits by Turkish officials will come at a useful time to
press the GOI and KRG to avoid confrontation.
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